

MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

December 9, 2009

The Harrisonburg Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 409 South Main Street.

Members present: Richard Baugh, Charles Chenault, Muawia Da'Mes, Alan Finks, Deb Fitzgerald, Bill Jones and J.M. Snell.

Members absent: none.

Also present: Stacy Turner, Director of Planning and Community Development; Adam Fletcher, City Planner; Alison Banks, Planner and Secretary.

Vice Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, determined there was a quorum with all seven members in attendance and introduced the newest member of Planning Commission, Deb Fitzgerald, who was appointed last night at the City Council meeting. He then asked for review and approval of the minutes from the November 12, 2009 Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Chenault moved to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2009 meeting.

Mr. Da'Mes seconded the motion.

Mr. Snell abstained from voting because he was not in attendance at the November 12, 2009 Planning Commission meeting.

All voted in favor of approving the minutes. (5-0)

Election of Officers for 2010

Vice Chairman Jones said as most of you are aware our Chairman, Jared Burden, has resigned from the Planning Commission because he has taken a new job and will be moving from the area. He then said the first item of business will be to elect officers for the 2010 calendar year. The floor is open to nominations at this time.

Mr. Snell said he would like to nominate Bill Jones as Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Finks seconded the nomination.

Vice Chairman Jones asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, he closed the nominations for Chairman and asked for a vote.

All members voted in favor of Bill Jones as Chairman for the Planning Commission. (7-0)

Chairman Jones then asked for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Da'Mes nominated J.M. Snell for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Baugh seconded the nomination.

Mr. Snell nominated Charlie Chenault for Vice Chairman. He then thanked the Commission for their support, but declined the nomination for himself as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Finks seconded the nomination of Mr. Chenault as Vice Chairman.

Chairman Jones asked if there were any other nominations for Vice Chairman. Hearing none, he closed the nominations and asked for a vote.

All voted in favor of Charlie Chenault as Vice Chairman. (7-0)

Mr. Fletcher reminded the Planning Commission that they would need to officially elect a secretary for the upcoming year.

Mr. Snell nominated Alison Banks as secretary for the Planning Commission.

Mr. Chenault seconded the nomination.

Chairman Jones called for a voice vote on the matter.

All voted in favor of Alison Banks as secretary. (7-0)

New Business

Capital Improvement Program Review

Mrs. Turner said we have the department heads here to present their projects. There are few new projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) this year. We will be focusing mainly on projects that are either priority projects for their departments in the next fiscal year or projects that are new to the CIP for their department. With that we will let each department do their presentation as usual, and then, after each presentation, you can ask any questions of them.

Mr. Chenault said this is just an idea and I would have to refer to our newest member, Deb, because I do not know how much of an opportunity she has had to look at the CIP; but, my thought is rather than having presentations perhaps we should just simply see if the Planning Commission had any questions for the department heads.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said it is fine with me to proceed that way.

Chairman Jones said he had no opposition to that idea.

Mrs. Turner said I do not believe there would be any objections from the department heads. Also, please note, I did put some replacement pages at your desks. The Emergency Communication Center had asked me to move their projects up one year and I neglected to do that, so their one project is included and it changed several of the summary tables as well. You have all those changes and corrections before you now. Their project is one that was in the program last year as well.

Chairman Jones asked if there were any questions for department heads or staff members regarding the CIP.

Mr. Chenault said he had a question for the Public Works Department. In your projects, would it be safe to say that Reservoir Street would be the next major project we will be tackling after Stone Spring Road/Erickson Avenue?

Mr. James Baker, Public Works Director, said that is correct. Reservoir Street would be the next big project that we would want to tackle in the format that we are currently using. We are closely watching the activity along Linda Lane. If there is any development that occurs there, it may jump ahead or along with Reservoir Street. However, we are hoping the development community would help us a little bit on that portion of Linda Lane between East Market Street and Country Club Road.

Mr. Chenault said it has been somewhat of a gridlock situation out on Reservoir Street with the opening of all the new housing projects. It has become somewhat worse than Port Republic Road.

Mr. Baker said he would like to report that the plans for Reservoir Street are complete to a level that right-of-way negotiations can begin to take place; we just have not brought those plans forward for your review yet.

Mr. Da'Mes said Planning Commission had a presentation by James Madison University (JMU) regarding their master plan and they gave us some insight as to having some traffic coordination type suggestions along Reservoir Street. Do these plans incorporate any of the suggestions from JMU's architects?

Mr. Drew Williams, Public Works Superintendent, said we have been coordinating with JMU on the planning. Because their master plan document is fairly conceptual at this point and they have not outlined or identified any specifics, we are moving forward with the plans that we have designed. They are compatible with what the University is looking to do long range.

Mr. Da'Mes said the architect just seemed to have several suggestions during his presentation, as to how to streamline traffic flow in that area.

Mr. Williams said if he has some suggestions we would be very interested in seeing them.

Chairman Jones asked if there were any further questions for any of the department heads or staff. Hearing none, he asked if there was a motion on the CIP.

Mr. Chenault moved to accept the CIP and forward it to City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Mr. Finks seconded the motion.

Chairman Jones said there is a motion and second to accept the CIP and forward it to City Council. He then called for a voice vote on the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion. (7-0)

Discussion for new street name

Chairman Jones read the item and asked staff to comment.

Mrs. Banks said as part of the current phase of the Stone Spring Road – Erickson Avenue Connector Project, Pear Street is being realigned at its intersection with Erickson Avenue. In doing so, a remnant of the existing Pear Street would remain and would have residential lots fronting along it. When the road project is complete this remnant would no longer be considered a portion of Pear Street; therefore, a new street name is necessary. Planning Commission is being asked to suggest names to City Council for this remaining portion of the road, which would be approximately 300 feet long, ending as a permanent cul-de-sac. Staff suggests considering the following: Kiwi Court; Plum Place; Lemon Lane; Comet Court; Galaxy Way; and Pluto Place.

Mrs. Fitzgerald suggested Bartlett Court.

Mr. Da'Mes said his daughter suggested Constellation Court.

Mr. Fletcher said these are good suggestions and we will check them with 911 to verify availability. Planning Commission can recommend several names to Council; 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, and so on. City Council would make the final decision.

Chairman Jones asked if there were any other suggestions.

Mr. Baugh said if we were to take one from the suggested list, he liked Kiwi Court.

Mr. Snell asked if City Council gave any idea of the number of street names.

Mrs. Banks said this has not gone before Council yet.

Mr. Snell said he liked Comet Court.

Mr. Baugh moved to send a list, in preference order, of Constellation Court; Bartlett Court; Kiwi Court; and Comet Court.

Mr. Snell seconded the motion.

Chairman Jones said we have a motion and a second for four names; he then called for a voice vote.

All voted in favor of the motion (7-0).

Unfinished Business

None.

Public Input

None.

Report of secretary and committees

Mrs. Banks said proactive zoning looked at the North Liberty Street area of the City. Fourteen violations were cited; these consisted of inoperable vehicles and discarded materials. Please notice that North Liberty Street is marked as the October proactive zoning; staff intends to make-up the two months that were missed and not just identifying them as months skipped.

Mr. Baugh said at the City Council meeting last night the amendment to the VMRC Master Plan was approved unanimously, as expected. The proposed parking lot amendment to R-3 was withdrawn at the applicant's request. Cypress Park preliminary plat was denied unanimously by City Council.

Mr. Fletcher reminded Planning Commission that their statements of economic interests, which they should have received, are due back to staff as soon as possible.

Other Matters

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Chairman William L. Jones, Jr.

Secretary, Alison Banks